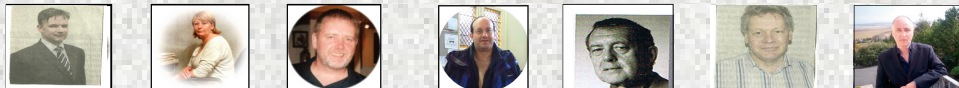




MANOR & CASTLE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 159

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Manor & Castle Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- Chairperson's Comments
- Councillor's Comment's
- Local information

Chairman's Comments

Charity payments: not income for Universal Credit

At last there is some reasonably good news about Universal Credit. This is the benefit which rolls 6 means tested benefits under the heading of Universal Credit.

Where claimants receive payments from charities (study grants, hardship donations, etc.) these should not count as income for Universal Credit purposes.

There are some people who may receive regular or one-off payments from charities. For example, this could be in the form of study grants or hardship payments from trusts associated with professions, armed services or benevolent societies.

These payments should not be regarded as income when assessing entitlement to Universal Credit. This is based on the principle that donations to individuals for charitable purposes are supplemental to and not a replacement for any social security benefits they may receive.

The exception would be a charitable payment of more than £6000, which would be regarded as capital. If someone (and their partner's) capital exceeds £6000, their entitlement will be reduced by tariff income regulations. This is currently set at £4.35 for every £250 in capital above the £6000 limit. If their capital exceeds £16,000, they will not be entitled to Universal Credit at all.

There are concerns that Universal Credit payments have been stopped for individuals where charitable payments have been wrongly stated as unearned income.

Should this happen that such a decision should be appealed against.

Roddy Nicolson

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Councillor's Report

We have had our final meetings of the five year term and how time flies by.

Scottish Apprentice week was a couple of weeks ago and the Comhairle discussed the issue of apprentices on the island. I said that Engineering companies on the islands should be encouraged to bring on more apprentices. With the current economic climate, firms see apprentices as maybe added expense and time that they are not able to give. However, all over Scotland, especially in the Engineering sector, the workforce is ageing. This is also true of Arnish where Bifab have not taken on any apprentices since they started working there eight years ago. This prompted me to write to Bifab encouraging the managing director to look at this issue and look to start taking on island apprentices. MG Alba called me for interview and I asked them if I could do it in Gaelic. I managed to enlist help from the Gaelic department at the college and did the interview in Gaelic. My mother was delighted and as she is the fiercest critic of speaking correctly pronounced Gaelic (basically Point Gaelic), I must have done ok—gle mhath! Lets hope Bifab start utilising our young people in Arnish!

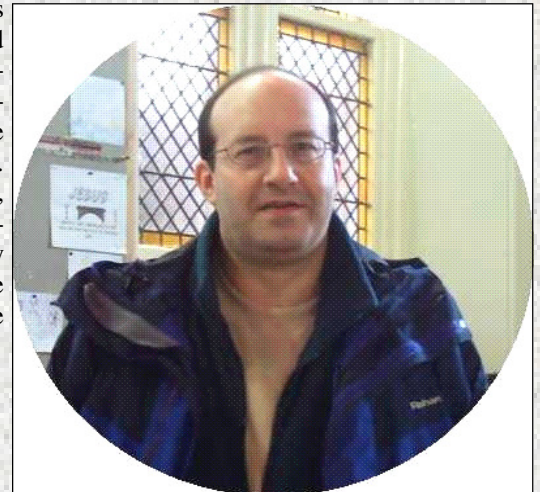
It appears that there maybe a huge issue with Scottish Gas customers. News has just broke about Stornoway consumers being unable to take advantage of cheaper gas tariffs due to their island location. If this is the case then there should be calls for compensation! Derek Macpherson, who runs Fernlea Guest House on Matheson Road, has been fighting for this for a number of years. I called him yesterday to offer my support to his cause and here's hoping there is a positive outcome to his campaign.

Just a reminder that the trip is going to Aberdeenshire this year and itineraries should be handed out at the AGM.

Another reminder that the council elections are on the 4th May.

As announced a number of months ago, Iain Hamilton is set to stand down as treasurer/secretary to the Association. I would like to thank Iain for all his hard work and commitment over the years. When you consider that he has been doing a dual role for 17 years, compiling minutes, doing the accounting, collecting monies, turning up faithfully to meetings (even Champion league nights!!!) - it is amazing the community service he has put in and the hours. People like Iain are so invaluable to our community and for me, personally, he has been a rock in the Association. I have taken a lot of advice and guidance from Iain and he has helped me in so many ways that I would like to say how much I appreciated his hard work, his patience and his commitment to the community—enjoy the retirement Iain - we'll be booking your place on the bus!!!!

Councillor Gordon Murray



Lewis Retirement Centre

You will find a warm welcome at Bayhead sessions every Friday at the Retirement Centre, Bayhead from 6:30pm.

Country music, classics, Irish and accordion tunes from a host of musicians. We have an audience of 30+ each week, so come along to meet some new people and enjoy some live music. Admission is £3.00 (includes a cuppa).



New technology

Islanders are making their way to Tea and Technology Retirement Centre, Bayhead with their mobile phones, ipads, kindles and laptops. The volunteer technology advisors are there every Wednesday afternoon until 5th April.

Tea and Technology will then move to The Centre for Independent Living, Grianan Centre, Westview Terrace for Wednesday 12th April, 19th April and 26th April.

Come along with your own device from 2pm, get an answer to your questions, and get to grips with all those features. It is all free. Tea and Tech at the CFIL is supported by the Western Isles Health Board and Remo-age



Tea & **Technology** *The Lewis Retirement Centre*

*Learn the basics of
your phone, i-pad,
laptop or tablet over
tea and biscuits.*

- **Learn on your own device**
- **Learn only what you need to know without complicated language**
- **There is an excellent WiFi link available free to Centre users**
- **No charge for the teaching or the WiFi**
- **It's a pop-in event, not a regular commitment so stay until you have learned what you need**
- **Pop in again for a refresher if you want**

*The Lewis Retirement Centre will be open from 2pm to 4pm
every Wednesday from 6th January 2016 for 12 weeks*

*Teas, coffees & soft drinks available throughout
(And biscuits!) for a nominal fee*

*Meet in a comfortable social environment, not in a classroom
Contact Donald McKee on 07747166758*

COOKS CORNER

A KISS AND A CODDLE - DUBLIN CODDLE RECIPE

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 4 oz/115g piece salty back bacon, weight after the rind removed
- 6 fat, [traditional pork sausages](#)
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely sliced
- 8 oz/250g white potatoes, finely sliced
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cups/500 ml [rich beef or chicken stock](#)

Method

Heat the oven to 425°F/220 °C/ gas 7

- In a large frying pan or skillet, heat the oil, add the onions and cook over a medium heat for about 4 minutes. Cut the bacon piece into ½"/1 cm cubes. Add the bacon to the onions and stir well. Cut the sausages in half and add these to the onion and bacon.
- Raise the heat and constantly stirring, cook until the sausages start to brown taking care not to burn the onions.
- In a heat proof casserole, place a layer of the onion, bacon and sausage mixture followed by the layer of sliced carrots and then a layer of potato. Season with salt and pepper. Repeat the layering until used up, finishing with a layer of potato.
- Carefully pour over the stock. Cover with a lid or a double layer of aluminum foil. Place in the centre of the oven and cook for 45 minutes. Take a peek to make sure the coddle isn't drying out (if necessary top up with a little boiling water but don't flood the stew). Lower the heat to 350°F/175°C/gas 4 and cook for a further 30 minutes until bubbling and the potatoes are thoroughly cooked.
- Remove from the oven and rest for 10 minutes before serving. The Coddle needs little else once cooked, simply serve with hefty slices of [Irish soda bread](#) and butter, to soak up all the lovely juices in the dish, as is the Irish way.



Message from Jane Ballantyne (Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) Tenants

Do you ever wonder.....

Where the money comes from and how it is spent?

What services do HHP provide?

Where and how you can contact staff at HHP?

Would you like to see through and into the decision making processes at HHP.

HHP are planning to increase the amount of information available on their website and at their offices.

HHP would like your views about the information that you can/will be able to access and the way to access information.

I have included a link to the consultation document.

Call me, message me, if you want to discuss.

07487891242

www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk

HEBRIDEANHOUSING.CO.UK

for the page